

Role model

what we want children to be, say, and do

YOU, and the other adults in your child care program, are possibly the most important "ingredient" in promoting positive eating behaviors in the young children you serve!

Taking stock . . . check your cupboard

Connect the topic to your life. What are your experiences, opinions, and concerns? What do you need?

Warm-up activity

Follow the leader's instructions carefully. After you play the game, fill in its name below and then fill in the missing word in the next sentence:

The name of our game is: _____

Children _____ the important adults in their lives.

Group discussion

What are some things we do as adults that contradict things we tell children?

1.

2.

3.

Watch and reflect

Watch and enjoy the video clip "Copy Cat" from *Parenting Counts* by the Talaris Research Institute. Used with permission.

My thoughts:

Assemble your ingredients and tools

Acquire the knowledge and skills you need to create the outcome you desire.

Definition of “role model” (Webster’s):

Any person whose behavior is imitated by others.

Group discussion

Look at the list below of different ways children are “taught” healthy behaviors. Which one do you think has the greatest impact? Circle it.”

1. Teaching via rewards and punishments:
“You’ll get a sticker if you eat your veggies.”
2. Teaching by explaining:
“Eat your vegetables to get lots of vitamins.”
3. Teaching via structured experiences:
Making stir-fry veggies together.
4. Teaching by example:
Enjoy eating vegetables in front of the child.

What is another way of saying “teaching by example”?

Being a positive _____.

What is your opinion of this quote?

“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”

— Haim Ginott

How do adults “role model” beliefs, attitudes and behaviors related to health (which includes eating, physical activity, and overall health)?

What are some things adults do at meals that reflect positive role modeling?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some things adults can do at meals that are *negative* role modeling?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some other places role-modeling occurs related to food and health?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Create your dish

Apply what you've learned to create the outcome you desire.

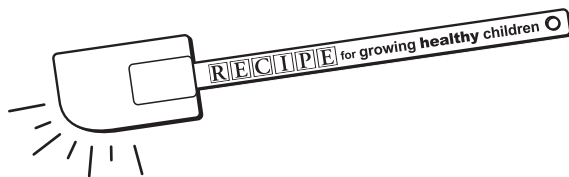


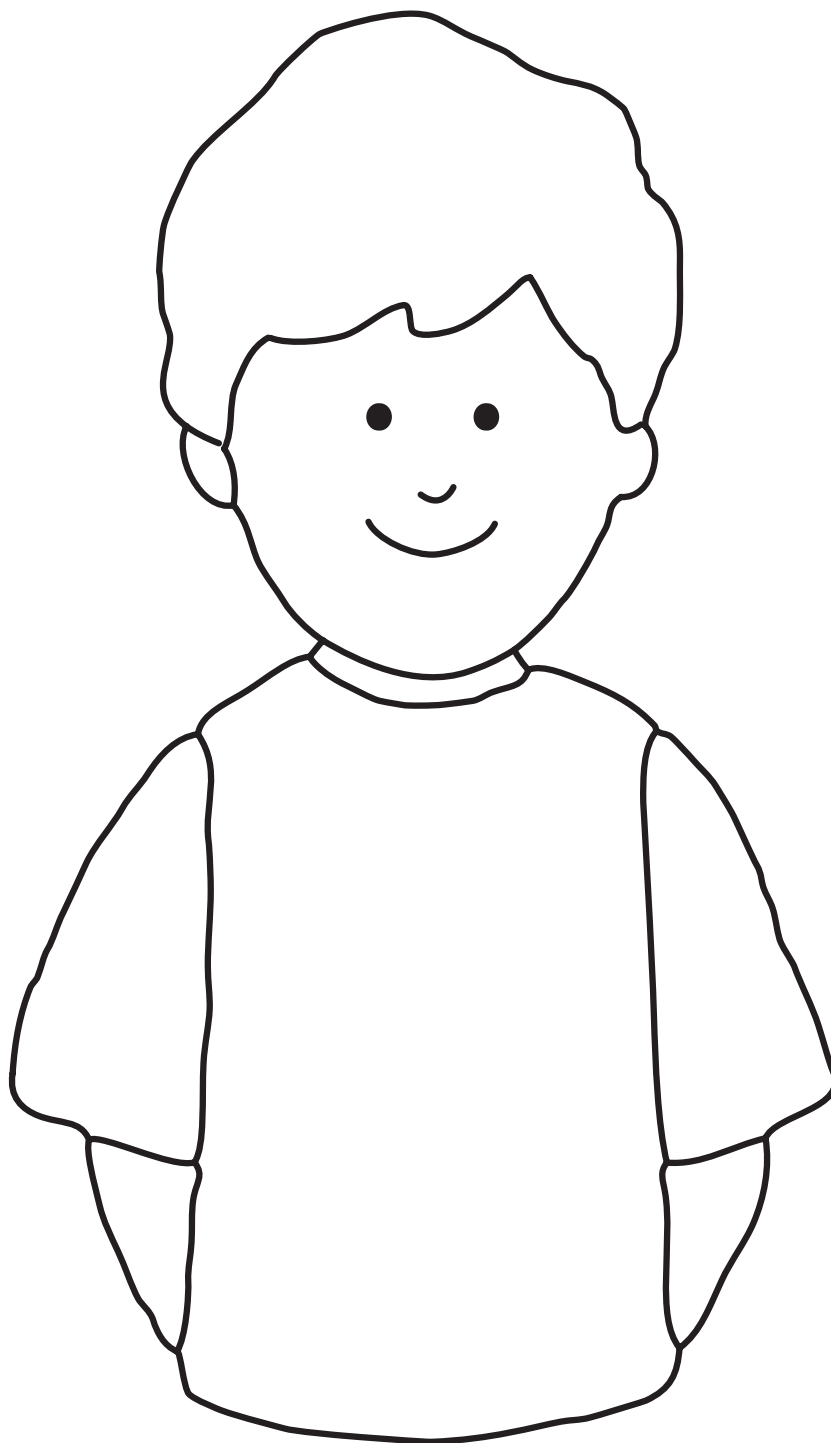
Table discussion

We stated that the objective of our RECIPE is to grow healthy children who eat well, practice positive eating and activity behaviors, and feel good about taking care of themselves.

Let's describe that in a little more detail. On the next page of your workbooks is an outline of a child. Go around your table and take three minutes to brainstorm words and phrases that describe the "healthy" person you want the children in your lives to become and write those *inside* the outline of the child.

After you've finished that, consider how you can help children attain that "ideal" by taking three more minutes to brainstorm ways you can role model what you've described. Write those ideas down around the *outside* of the child.

Healthy Children Exercise



Serve it, savor it, and succeed

Take your “dish” home. Share it with others, savor it yourself, and make it even better.

At the end of each segment of the workshop you will take time to set goals and begin an action plan to achieve your desired outcomes.

Accomplishing your goals requires moving what you learned in the workshop into the future . . .

- Take it back to your workplace and share it with co-workers and parents.
- Reflect on it personally and continue to learn more.
- Evaluate your progress on meeting your goals to set yourself up for ongoing success.

My goal and action plan

Define what you desire to achieve and make a plan to succeed.

1. How I want to see more positive role modeling implemented in our facility.

2. How I personally intend to begin more consistently role modeling positive attitudes and behaviors about food, eating, physical activity, and health.

Serve it — A plan for staff training

You will need a flipchart and markers, a television with a DVD player, index cards and pens or pencils. Allow 20-30 minutes for this meeting. Arrange the room for everyone to face one another.

SAY: “Today’s topic is role modeling what we want children to be, say, and do. You and the other adults in our child care program are possibly the most important “ingredient” in promoting positive eating behaviors in the young children we serve.”

Ice breaker

DO: You will perform an action and instruct your audience to follow you, but what you *SAY* and what you *DO* will contradict each other.

How to do it

SAY: “We’re going to play a little game and I’ll tell you the name of the game after we play it. Please follow my instructions very carefully.”

DO: Pick one of the following examples to demonstrate.

1. **SAY:** “Point your index finger up to the ceiling and then touch your opposite elbow.”

DO: Touch your shoulder instead of your elbow.

SAY: “Hold it there and look around.”

2. **SAY:** “Hold your thumb and forefinger one inch apart like this (demonstrate) and pinch your nose.”

DO: But actually pinch your ear.

SAY: “Hold it there and look around.”

3. **SAY:** “Raise your hand with your palm facing out. Now pat your head.”

DO: But actually pat your tummy.

SAY: “Hold it there and look around.”

SAY: “This game is called “Monkey See, Monkey Do.” Some of you did what I said, but many of you did what you saw me do.”

“Have you noticed that children imitate the important adults in their lives?”

“What are some things we do as adults that contradict things we tell children?”

“Let’s see if we can think of three good examples . . .”

DO: Allow time for participants to respond, recording their answers on the flipchart. Show the “Copy Cat” video clip from *Parenting Counts* by the Talaris Research Institute, available on the workshop DVD or online at www.talaris.org.

Discussion: Role modeling

SAY: “According to Webster’s dictionary, a role model is any person whose behavior is imitated by others.”

DO: Discuss the impact of learning by example (provide the list below by putting it on a handout, or writing it on a board or poster).

SAY: “Look at this list of different ways children are “taught” healthy behaviors. Which one do you think has the greatest impact?”

1. Teaching via rewards and punishments:
“You’ll get a sticker if you eat your veggies.”
2. Teaching by explaining:
“Eat your vegetables to get lots of vitamins.”
3. Teaching via structured experiences:
Making stir-fry veggies together.
4. Teaching by example:
Enjoy eating vegetables in front of the child.

SAY: “Research in education and child development shows that teaching by example has the greatest impact. When it comes to teaching healthy eating behaviors, that means enjoying eating YOUR vegetables in front of the child.”

ASK: “Do you agree with this quote?”

“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”
— Haim Ginott

ASK: “How do adults “role model” beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to health (which includes eating, physical activity, and overall health)?”

“What are some things adults can do at meals that are *positive* role modeling?”
(Allow for a few responses, recording them on the flipchart.)

“What are some things adults can do at meals that are *negative* role modeling?”
(Allow for a few responses, recording them on the flipchart.)

“Would you agree that meals and snacks eaten with children is only one place role-modeling occurs? What are some other places role-modeling occurs related to food and health?”
(Allow for a few responses, recording them on the flipchart.)

Discussion: Becoming a positive role model

DO: Have a copy of the outline of a child from the workbook on the flipchart or a poster.

SAY: “Here is an outline of a child. Let’s go around the group and brainstorm words and phrases that describe the “healthy” people we want the children in our lives to become. I will write those words inside the outline of the child.”
(Allow everyone to share one or two ideas, or more if time allows.)

“Now, let’s consider how we can help children attain that “ideal” by brainstorming ways we can role model what we’ve described. I’ll write those ideas down around the outside of the child.”

Goal setting

DO: Give everyone an index card. Write the following two questions on the flipchart for their reference and have them write their answers on their cards.

ASK: “How do you want to see more positive role modeling implemented in our child care program?”

“How do you personally intend to begin more consistently role modeling positive attitudes and behaviors about food, eating, physical activity, and health?”

DO: Have the group share their goals. Discuss putting their cards somewhere they will see them every day.

Serve it — A plan for parent education

The staff in-service outline above could be adapted for a parent meeting.

Other discussion openers to use with parents:

- Describe a dream you have for your child.
- How much influence do you think you can have on what your child believes and does? A lot? A little? In what ways?
- In what ways do you want your child to be like you?
- What do you hope your child learns from you? How do you plan to teach that?
- In what ways would you like your child to be different from you?
- How easy or hard is it for you to change a behavior that you do not want your child to imitate?
- What are some changes you've made since becoming a parent?
- What qualities do you have that make you a good parent?
- What do you think of the following quotations?

Be today the person you want your child to be tomorrow.

You can't give away something you don't have.

Nothing is more confusing than people who give good advice but set bad examples.

The world is a great mirror. It reflects back what you are.

DO: Show the parents the “Copy Cat” video clip from Parenting Counts by the Talaris Research Institute, and discuss positive and negative role modeling.

DO: Provide the handout “Do as I Do: Parents as Nutritional Role Models” from The Ohio State University Extension Family Tapestries Packet. Or provide the handout from the MyPyramid for Preschoolers Web site titled: “Set a Good Example — They Take Their Lead from You.”

Savor it— Reflecting on your personal health

Your lifestyle and health behaviors, and how you feel about your health and your body, have a huge impact on the children you come into contact with in your child care program. They are watching you. Your attitudes and behaviors will become their attitudes and behaviors.

Take some time to reflect on what it means to practice a healthy lifestyle, which is not measured by the pounds on the bathroom scale, but by having healthy attitudes and behaviors related to physical activity, food and eating, and body image.

Consider whether you are comfortable with eating and trust yourself to feed and nurture yourself with regular and satisfying meals and snacks, “tuning-in” to your body’s internal cues of when you’re hungry and when you’re full. Are you chronically on a “diet”? Do you talk around children and others about foods you “should” or “should not” eat? Do you talk negatively about your body and your weight? Children need to see you enjoying all foods, talking positively about all foods, and expressing pleasure and satisfaction in eating.

The following resources are available online:

- *Normal Eating: Are You a Normal Eater?* from www.healthyweight.net
- *The ABC's of Health-Focused Well-Being* to focus on health, not weight, at <http://ces.uwyo.edu/PUBS/MP112-4.pdf>
- *The Last Orange on Earth*, an activity to teach mindful eating, at www.uwyo.edu/CES/PUBS/MP112-5.pdf
- *The Clean Plate Club* with tips for dropping out ... or never joining, at www.uwyo.edu/CES/PUBS/MP112-1.pdf
- *Quick Guide to Healthy Living* and other resources are available at www.healthfinder.gov, a site from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with information and tools to help people stay healthy and prevent disease. This site has a “myhealthfinder” tool that provides personalized health recommendations based on your sex, age, and pregnancy status.
- For a personalized approach to tracking your food and nutrient intake, visit www.mypyramid.gov and use the MyPyramid Tracker tool.
- For practical ideas for becoming more active, visit the America On the Move Web site at www.americaonthemove.org. Enjoy being active with the children in your child care program! Dance, play, and engage in regular movement activities.
- *Loving Your Body Inside and Out* at womenshealth.gov covers the important topic of how your body image plays a role in your kid’s body image. Learn more at www.4woman.gov/bodyimage/kids/ and access more resources for yourself and parents.

Individually, or with others in your child care program, set up a schedule for reflecting on your progress in meeting your goals. Do one area every month, so each is evaluated twice a year, or do three or more areas every two or three months. Write down in your calendar reminders to perform these progress checks. Make copies of this evaluation page and date and record the progress you make.

1. Ways I/we have seen more positive role modeling in our facility:
2. Ways I/we have personally role modeled more positive attitudes and behaviors about food, eating, physical activity, and health:
3. Did we have a staff meeting/in-service training to discuss role modeling?
How did it go?
4. Have we provided parents with any education or resources about role modeling?
How?
5. Describe steps taken to reflect on my personal health and positive changes made to improve my lifestyle habits, attitudes, and body image:

References and resources

Recent research on the impact of parental role modeling on the food choices of young children:

- Sutherland L.A., Beavers D.P., Kupper L.L., Bernhardt A.M., Heatherton T., Dalton M.A. *Like Parent, Like Child: Child Food and Beverage Choices During Role Playing*. Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. 2008; 162(11):1063-1069.

The following resources are available online:

- “Copy Cat” video clip from *Parenting Counts* by the Talaris Research Institute. Source: workshop DVD or online at www.talaris.org
- *Do as I Do: Parents as Nutritional Role Models* from The Ohio State University Extension Family Tapestries Packet: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm03/FS07.pdf>
- *Set a Good Example — They Take Their Lead from You* from the MyPyramid for Preschoolers Web site: www.MyPyramid.gov
- *Home Is Where the Health Is: Create “Family Glue” and Build a Happy, Healthy Home* from the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service: www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/fcs7/fcs7188/fcs7188.pdf
- *Normal Eating: Are You a Normal Eater?* www.healthyweight.net
- *The ABC's of Health-Focused Well-Being* puts the focus on health, not weight. Source: <http://ces.uwyo.edu/PUBS/MP112-4.pdf>
- *The Last Orange on Earth*, an activity to teach mindful eating. Source: www.uwyo.edu/CES/PUBS/MP112-5.pdf
- *The Clean Plate Club*, with tips for dropping out . . . or never joining. Source: www.uwyo.edu/CES/PUBS/MP112-1.pdf
- *Quick Guide to Healthy Living* and other resources are available at www.healthfinder.gov, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site with information and tools to help people stay healthy and prevent disease. This site has a “myhealthfinder” tool that provides personalized health recommendations based on your sex, age, and pregnancy status.
- For a personalized approach to tracking your food and nutrient intake, visit www.mypyramid.gov and use the MyPyramid Tracker tool.
- For practical ideas for becoming more active, visit the America on the Move Web site at www.americaonthemove.org. Enjoy being active with the children in your child care program! Dance, play, and engage in regular movement activities.
- *Loving Your Body Inside and Out* covers the important topic of how your body image plays a role in your kid's body image. Source: www.womenshealth.gov
- Learn more at www.4woman.gov/bodyimage/kids/ and access more resources for yourself and parents.